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# IMPROVING EDUCATION IN ALBERTA

## QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

MARCH 1995



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## INTRODUCTION

On February 17, 1995 the Minister of Education, Halvar Jonson, released government's updated three-year plan for education "Meeting the Challenge II". The plan provides details on the continuing enhancement of Alberta's education system. The following are some important facts about the ongoing changes to education in Alberta.

## RESTRUCTURING EDUCATION

### *Q1. What is the government doing as part of its restructuring of education?*

- A1. The key directions and initiatives of the education restructuring were outlined in education's three-year plan (1994/95 to 1996/97) released in February of 1994. An update of this plan (1995/96 to 1997/98), called Meeting the Challenge II, was released on February 21, 1995.

The major initiatives in the plan focus on:

- providing a quality basic education for all students.
- setting high standards for education and clearly communicating the standards and achievement of students against these standards.
- increasing education decision-making at the local school level.
- increasing the opportunity for meaningful involvement of parents and the local community in education decisions.
- reducing and controlling administrative expenditures with education resources focussed on student instruction.
- fair funding for all schools with an equal opportunity for all students to a quality education.
- providing more opportunity for parents and students to choose schools and programs within the public and separate system.
- improving teaching.

### *Q2. Why such dramatic change to our education system; isn't it already a good system?*

- A2. Alberta's education system is an excellent system and has served students well in the past. Now it must meet the changing needs of students in a rapidly changing world.

Alberta students must be well prepared to be competitive in a new global workforce, and for life-long learning. Alberta's education system must work with other Departments, employers, parents and the community to meet the challenges and access the opportunities presented to it.

A restructured education system will ensure that we continue to meet the education needs of students and the expectations of society, at a cost that Albertans can afford.

## LOCAL DECISION-MAKING

**Q3.** *How can you increase local decision-making when you are taking away a school board's ability to raise funds through local property taxes and telling them how to spend their funds through the funding framework?*

**A3.** Increasing local decision-making means increasing the decision-making authority and ability at the local school level. The centralized decision-making of the past, at either the school board or provincial government level does not meet the new needs of the education system.

Under a school based decision-making system, school principals with the help of parents, teachers and the local community will make most of the decisions about how education dollars are spent and how education programs are delivered.

The new funding framework provides school boards with greater flexibility in deciding how best to spend their money to meet local needs and priorities. Provincial restrictions have been reduced by some 30% compared to the 1994/95 funding system.

School boards continue to have the ability to raise additional revenues from local property taxes for special projects or local needs through a local plebiscite. This allows school boards to raise up to an additional 3% of their annual operating budgets, once every three years, at the time of school trustee elections.

School boards continue to make the decisions about how best to meet area needs and how best to allocate funds to individual schools. All school boards are now funded on a fair and equitable basis so that they can provide quality education to local students.

**Q4.** *When will school based decision-making be fully in place?*

**A4.** Many school boards have already moved a significant way toward the principles of school based management.

It is expected that the system will be in place by the 1996/97 school year.

A formal consultation process on Roles & Responsibilities in Education is now being carried out by an MLA Team led by Don Tannas, MLA for Highwood. This consultation process will assist in the final decisions about redefined roles and responsibilities in education. They are expected to be announced in the spring of this year.



## INCREASED PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

### **Q5. *How will parents have the opportunity for more meaningful involvement in education decisions?***

- A5. Increased involvement for school councils, along with the move to school based decision-making, will provide parents and the local community with the opportunity for more meaningful participation in the education system.

A comprehensive consultation process, led by the MLA Team on Roles & Responsibilities in Education, has been underway since the Spring of 1994 to clearly define the roles and responsibilities of the new school councils.

The final decisions on school councils and their expanded role in the education system will reflect the concerns and priorities brought forward during the consultations. The regulations governing the school councils will be released in the Spring of 1995 to allow the new councils to be in place for the 1995/96 school year.

The position paper suggests that parents at their own discretion should have the opportunity to be involved in decisions about how dollars are spent at the school, what programs are offered, and how education is delivered. Parents and school councils would determine the level of their involvement in decision-making.

### **Q6. *Isn't government forcing parents to take on more responsibility in the school than they want, are qualified for or have time for?***

- A6. During public consultations on education parents have repeatedly told government that they want the chance to have meaningful involvement in education decision-making at their local schools.

The expanded opportunity for school councils does not force any parent to be involved, it only provides the opportunity if a parent is interested. The draft position paper on school councils suggests that school councils could take on very different roles at different schools, depending upon the level of parental interest and time at each school.

The bottom line is that the opportunity will be available for parents to be involved, if and when they feel their involvement is desirable, beneficial, or necessary.

**Q7. *Won't these school councils allow "single-interest" groups to take control of a council and move the school in directions not wanted by the majority of parents?***

- A7. School councils must reflect the priorities and attitudes of the parents, and community at large and as such, would be democratically elected by parents of students in the school. School Councils will be able to, and should, have a structure which would involve all parents in major initiatives or policy discussions.

School councils would not make unilateral decisions about what happens in a local school. They would be participants in the decision-making process along with teachers, the principal and the school board. Ultimately the principal and the school board must ensure that decisions made are in the best educational interest of all of the students in the school.

School councils would be no more likely to be "taken over" by special interest groups than is the locally elected board of school trustees.

The majority of parents are knowledgeable about and understand the education needs of their children, and care about the needs of the education system as a whole, and would make knowledgeable, responsible and caring decisions about education.

## **REDUCING ADMINISTRATION SPENDING**

**Q8. *How is administration spending being reduced?***

- A8. The Department of Education is being reduced by 20% by 1996/97, including the closing of Regional Offices of Education in Grande Prairie, Lethbridge and Red Deer.

Over the past two years, the number of school boards has been reduced from 181 (including 40 school boards that did not even operate schools) to 57 in 1995. This resulted in a reduction in the number of school trustees from well over 1,100 to about 450. This move will save \$13 million in administration spending in the short-term and encourage increased efficiencies in the future.

Increased efficiencies in school operations and maintenance and student transportation, and a cap of 4% for school board central office administration spending, will free-up \$60 million for student instruction in 1995/96 and \$100 million by 1997/98.

Spending on education capital construction was reduced by \$100 million in the 1991-1995 education capital plan and future capital spending will be limited to ensuring that Alberta has safe schools that can adequately accommodate students.



**Q9. *How does this help the quality of education?***

A9. The money that is saved as a result of the reduction in administration spending can be redirected to student instruction.

Redirecting money to student instruction means that there will be more money in schools for teachers, teacher assistants and learning resources for students.

Through administration cuts and reinvestment in education in the coming years, there will be an additional \$120 million available for student instruction by 1997/98.

## **INCREASED STUDENT AND PARENT CHOICE**

**Q10. *How are you providing more choice to parents and students in the selection of schools and education programs?***

A10. In the 1995/96 school year, Alberta students will be able to attend the public or separate school of their choice, providing that school has the room and resources to accommodate the student. Students living within the attendance area of the school would continue to have first priority. This is made possible through full provincial funding of education.

Beginning in the 1995/96 school year, up to 15 Charter Schools will be approved to commence operation. These Charter Schools will offer education programs, delivery methods or learning environments not currently available within the local public or separate school system. This will provide students with increased choice in selecting an education program.

**Q11. *Won't these Charter Schools create "elitist" schools that exclude many of Alberta's students?***

A11. No. Charter Schools are part of Alberta's system of public schools. As such they must be open to any student interested in challenging the program offered by the school as long as sufficient space and resources are available. As well, Charter Schools may not charge tuition fees, further ensuring that any student can have access to a Charter School.

## PRIVATE SCHOOLS

**Q12.** *If a student chooses to attend a private school does the full amount of that student's funding go to the private school.*

A12. No. Except for specific grants for severely disabled students going to High Need private schools funding follows the student only within the public and separate school system. It does not go directly to a school but to the school board that operates the school. Private schools are funded differently from public or separate school boards. The basic per student instruction grant for a private school is \$1,761 per student compared to \$3,686 in the public system.

**Q13.** *Why aren't private schools funded at the same level as public schools?*

A13. Government's priority is to provide a quality public education system, with high standards that is open and accessible to every student in Alberta. Therefore the focus of government funding is on that quality public system.

Government supports parent and student choice of a private school, but does not expect Alberta taxpayers to pay the full cost of that choice.

Therefore, while government does provide some funding for private schools, it is not at the same level as for the public system. However, Alberta's funding of private schools is second only to Quebec, among Canadian provinces.

**Q14.** *What is public education?*

A14. The public education system is the broad array of education programs and services that are open and accessible to all Alberta students, in a variety of settings, and that is supported by public funds.

In Alberta the "public" education system includes public schools, separate Catholic and Protestant schools, charter schools, home education programs and distance education programs.

Private schools, although not part of the public system of education, are a supplement to public education and therefore receive some funding support.



## HIGH STANDARDS

**Q15.** *The three-year education plan indicates government will “establish and communicate clear learning outcomes and high standards for education”. What does this mean?*

A15. Statements are being prepared to describe what students are expected to know and be able to do in each subject area. These expected learning outcomes are being prepared for each subject area and grade. As well, to indicate the standards of performance for each grade and subject area, guidelines are being prepared for assessing how well a student is performing in relation to the expected learning outcomes.

To help teachers understand and apply provincial standards, classroom assessment materials in the core subjects are being prepared for all grade levels. The materials include samples of student work illustrating the expected standards for each grade and subject area. As well, teachers now have the opportunity to mark their students' grade 3, 6, and 9 provincial achievement tests, and this will help to clarify the level of performance expected in each grade and subject area.

## IMPROVED TEACHING

**Q16** *How do you intend to improve teaching in the province?*

A16. As part of education's three year plan there are three major initiatives to improve teaching. They are:

- establish competencies for beginning and experienced teachers
- update teacher preparation and certification requirements
- develop a coordinated approach to the delivery of professional development opportunities for teachers.

**Q17.** *What do you mean by “establish competencies” for beginning and experienced teachers?*

A17. Competencies are the knowledge, skills and attributes teachers use to help students learn.

Draft knowledge, skill and attribute requirements for beginning teachers were developed and consulted on in 1993 and received agreement in principle from education interest groups.

Further consultation will now be undertaken to establish standards that teachers will be expected to meet when they begin teaching, and a second set of standards to be met after two years of teaching and professional development. The second set of standards will be a minimum that all teachers will be expected to maintain throughout their careers. These standards will focus on basic requirements that are achievable.

**Q18.** *What plans are in place to "update" teacher preparation and certification requirements?*

A18. The objective of this initiative is to link the preparation and certification of teachers directly with the key competencies identified as necessary for teachers in Alberta.

Having conducted some preliminary consultation with the Council on Alberta Teaching Standards (an advisory council to the Minister of Education), Alberta Education will now be developing a process on how best to link teacher preparation, professional development, evaluation and certification.

**Q19.** *Is government planning to require teachers to have their certificate to teach renewed by government every five years?*

A19. Government has not proposed and is not now proposing nor considering a plan that would involve 5-year renewable certificates or licenses for teachers.

## **REDUCED DUPLICATION AND REPETITION**

**Q20.** *How do you intend to reduce duplication and repetition in the education system?*

A20. Alberta is expanding the provincial achievement testing program at the Grade 3, 6 and 9 level and providing classroom teachers with the opportunity to mark their student's achievement tests and use the results in student evaluations. This will reduce the need for each school system to prepare individual assessment tools and local testing programs.

Alberta is working with other western provinces and territories to prepare common curriculum objectives and standards. The priority is to develop a common curriculum objectives in mathematics, but a similar project is planned in language arts. These initiatives will help reduce duplication of effort among the provinces.

Post-secondary institutions are involved in the preparation of provincial education programs and standards to ensure that the knowledge and skills students develop in grades 1-12 will successfully prepare them for further training at the post-secondary level, thus reducing repetition in programming.



## FEES

*Q21. What new fees or charges are being introduced by Alberta Education in the coming year?*

- A21. As announced in February of 1994, Alberta Education is implementing several increased or new fees in relation to specific services provided to individuals. They include:
- Effective September 1, 1994 a fee of \$25 for issuing a permanent teaching certificate
  - Effective September 1, 1994 a fee of \$35 for teacher certification of an Alberta graduate and \$150 for out-of-province/North American graduates.
  - Effective April 1, 1995 a service charge of \$10 for an Official Transcript of student courses and marks. An information report called a Statement of Courses and Marks will still be available to students at no charge.
  - A fee of \$25.00 is proposed for implementation in 1995 for re-writes of provincial high school diploma examinations. There would be no fee for the first writing of the exam.

*Q22. Why were these fees introduced?*

- A22. The fees will help to recover some of the costs of providing these individual services and bring the charges more in-line with what other provinces are charging for the same or similar services.

## EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES

*Q23. What is the level of government support for ECS for the coming year?*

- A23. Provincial funding for ECS has increased from \$595 per child to \$850 per child, a 43% increase.

With the increased funding ECS operators must now provide a minimum of 240 hours of programming, up from 200 hours.

Funding for ECS children with special needs, and transportation funding for ECS children with special needs has been maintained.

All ECS program operators must now provide access to a basic 240 hour program without instruction fees.

Additional hours of ECS programming may be provided either through the transfer of other school board funds, charging parent fees, a special tax levy through a plebiscite or a combination of the options. If fees are charged, these fees should be commensurate with the actual cost of the extra hours. However, in all cases the basic 240 hour program must be available without charge.

**Q24.** *Why was the ECS funding increased only to the 240 hour level and not the former 400 hour program?*

A24. The goal of an ECS program is to help to prepare children for formal education and for a successful entry into Grade 1.

As part of the restructuring of education, Alberta Education has developed a draft kindergarten program statement. This statement describes the learning achievements that will prepare children for successful learning experiences in Grade 1, and help to ensure a consistent ECS program across Alberta.

Government firmly believes that the learning expectations outlined in the ECS program statement can be achieved in a 240 hour classroom program which supports the teamwork of families and communities.

## MEASURING AND REPORTING

**Q25.** *What is being done to ensure high student achievement and an accountable education system?*

A25. Through an extensive consultation process a new accountability and reporting system for education is being developed which will:

- use results to make changes to improve education;
- measure what should be taught and how well students learned the materials;
- measure the most important aspects of schooling and system operations;
- provide information that is relevant to policies adopted by the government;
- encourage fair comparisons;
- be easy to use by both Alberta Education and local school systems;
- provide parents and other Albertans with timely and meaningful information;
- be consistent across the province.

**Q26.** *How is measuring results part of Alberta Education's Three-Year Plan for Education?*

A26. One of the goals of the Education Plan is to establish a more accountable education system. The Plan says that provincial and school board performance measures will be used to assess and report regularly to the public on the effectiveness of Alberta's education system. Providing the public with clear, meaningful, and timely information on student achievement, and the performance and costs of the education system is a key strategy for achieving a more accountable education system.



***Q27 What is the purpose of the provincial performance measures in the Business Plan?***

A27. Performance measures have been developed to assess results. There are 29 performance measures in the updated Three-Year Business Plan for Education. They have been designed to determine if students are learning the skills and knowledge necessary to become self-reliant, responsible, caring, and contributing members of society; if parents are involved in and satisfied with education; if teachers are supported in their teaching efforts; and if the overall administration of education is efficient, effective, flexible, and ensures equity of education opportunities. The appropriateness of these measures, and others, are being reviewed in the context of current Accountability consultations.

***Q28. Do all 29 measures apply to schools and school systems as well as the province?***

A28. No. The province will consider using all 29 measures to determine how well the provincial education system, including Alberta Education, is doing. Some of the measures will be applied to school systems and schools. Consultation with parents, students, business, teachers, school boards, superintendents and other Albertans is helping to form decisions about which measures should be used by the Province, school systems and schools.

***Q29. What will be done with the information obtained from the performance measures?***

A29. Information obtained will be reported annually to the public by the province, and school jurisdictions. These results reports will help identify areas of improvement or areas where improvements are needed at the school, school jurisdiction, and provincial levels.

***Q30. Why is the province requiring school boards to prepare education plans and report on results?***

A30. To ensure that school boards' priorities are consistent with provincial directions for education the province is requiring school boards to include certain items in their local plans and submit these plans to the Minister of Education starting in 1995/96. The first school board education plan will be an interim one-year plan due in September 1995.

School board education plans and Annual Education Reports are an important part of accountability. They demonstrate to government, parents and the public what school boards intend to do with education funds to educate young Albertans, what has been achieved, and how areas in need of improvement are being addressed.

## FUNDING OF EDUCATION

### *Q31. How much is education funding being reduced in 1995/96?*

A31. Total spending on education in 1995/96 will be \$2.826 billion, a reduction of \$42 million, or 1.5% from 1994/95.

By 1997/98 education spending will increase to \$2.842 billion. The overall reduction in education spending from 1992/93 to 1997/98 will be about 5.6%.

### *Q32. How much of the spending is provincial and how much is from local education property tax revenue?*

A32. In 1995/96 the total education spending of \$2.826 billion is made up of \$1.485 billion, or about 53%, from the provincial General Revenue Fund and \$1.341 billion, or 47% from education property tax revenues.

The \$1.34 billion in revenues from education property taxes includes revenues in the Alberta School Foundation Fund and revenues collected directly by opted-out separate school boards.

### *Q33. What is the Alberta School Foundation Fund?*

A33. The Alberta School Foundation Fund is a new trust fund into which all revenues received by the provincial government from local education property taxes are placed. These funds are then allocated to school boards on an equal per student basis.

The Fund was created as part of the move to full provincial funding of education.

### *Q34. What is full provincial funding of education?*

A34. It is a process whereby the provincial government receives the revenues from local education property taxes and funds from the provincial General Revenue Fund, and allocates these resources to school boards on a fair and equitable basis.



**Q35. *How is this different from before?***

- A35. Previously the provincial government provided funds to school boards from the General Revenue Fund and school boards would supplement these resources through local property tax revenue.

Large differences in the wealth of the local tax base resulted in a large difference in the ability of school boards to obtain revenues from local property taxes. This caused inequities in funding for school boards and put some students in Alberta at an educational disadvantage.

Under full provincial funding all education dollars are shared on a fair and equitable basis among school boards and all students, no matter where in the province they live, have equal access to a quality basic education. No longer does the amount a school board have to spend on its students depend on the wealth of the local property tax base.

**Q36. *How is it determined how much funding each school board will receive?***

- A36. Beginning in the 1995/96 school year resources are allocated to school boards fairly and equitably, based on a new funding framework, announced February 1, 1995.

An equal amount of \$3,686 per student is provided to every school board, for basic instruction. Other instruction dollars are provided based on a number of factors, including the number of students with severe disabilities, English as a second language students, Early Childhood Services children, and home education students; the sparsity of student populations and the distance of a school jurisdiction from major centres.

Additional funding is provided to school boards for school operations and maintenance (heat, light, cleaning etc.) and student transportation, based on meeting cost requirements.

Funds for administration are provided to school boards on the basis of 4% - 6% of the funding for instruction, operations and maintenance and transportation. School boards with smaller enrolments receive a larger percentage to recognize their small instructional base. Spending on administration is strictly limited so that most resources are directed to student instruction. Reducing administration spending will free-up \$60 million additional dollars for instruction this year.

Separate funding is also provided to school boards to cover the costs of approved new school construction, renovations, and capital debt repayment on school buildings.

***Q37. What is an "opted-out" school board?***

- A37. Separate school boards may opt-out of the Alberta School Foundation Fund and directly tax local declared ratepayers.

Total funding for opted-out separate boards is limited to the same level as would have been received under the full provincial funding plan and all spending guidelines for the funding framework apply equally to opted-out and participating school boards.

There is no financial or administrative advantage to separate school boards opting-out.

***Q38. If there is no advantage why would a separate school board opt-out?***

- A38. The opting-out provision for separate school boards responds to concerns of some separate school boards regarding Constitutional rights to directly tax local declared supporters.

Nine out of 24 separate school boards have not used the opting-out provision and are participating in the provincial plan for the 1995 tax year.

***Q39. Will the new funding framework and full provincial funding mean more or less money for education?***

- A39. The funding framework does not change the total amount of money available for education purposes. It is a method of distributing available education resources among school boards on a fair and equitable basis.

Under full provincial funding the amount of money spent on education will be based on the cost of providing quality education to all Alberta students within the context of government's deficit and debt elimination plan.

***Q40. Has the move to full provincial funding changed the ratio on education spending, putting a larger burden on local property taxes?***

- A40. As part of the deficit elimination plan provincial general revenue fund spending on education is being reduced by about \$262 million or about 15% between 1992/93 and 1997/98.

Due to economic growth in Alberta it is projected that education property tax revenues will increase by \$112 million or 9% in that same period. This growth is about the rate of growth in student enrollment.

The combined effect is an overall reduction of about 5% in total education spending.



Provincial general revenue funds will make up about 53% of total education spending in 1995/96. This will be relatively the same proportion as in 1997/98.

Beginning in 1997/98 provincial general revenue fund spending on education will begin to increase.

## EDUCATION TAXES

### ***Q41. Will education property taxes increase as a result of the move to full provincial funding?***

A41. As part of the plan for full provincial funding government has made a commitment to maintain the education property tax rate at or below the 1993 provincial average equalized millrate until at least 1998.

The small growth in revenues from education property taxes will result not from increased education taxes but from the growth in the provincial economy and the increase in the number of new properties being assessed.

In 1994, when the province assumed responsibility for education property taxes the average provincial equalized mill rate for education was cut from 7.64 in 1993 to 7.50.

### ***Q42. Will the government be addressing the problem of inequity in education property taxes?***

A42. Yes. Part of the plan for full provincial funding of education involves moving to a uniform education property tax rate by 1997. This will ensure that all Alberta property taxpayers pay a fair share in support of education.

The move to a uniform tax rate will be phased-in over three years to ensure that ratepayers do not experience a dramatic change in education property taxes in a given year. By 1997 taxpayers will pay similar education taxes on property of similar value, no matter where in the province they live.

### ***Q43. How will this affect education taxes in individual municipalities?***

A43. The uniform provincial equalized education tax rate in 1997 will be at, or lower than, the average rate in 1993.

Those municipalities above the provincial average will see their education tax rates reduced, while those below average will see some increase.

It is estimated that about 68% of municipalities will see their education tax rates remain the same or drop.

By 1997 all taxpayers will pay similar education taxes on properties of similar value.

**Q44.** *How can Albertans be assured that all funds collected by the government through local education property tax requisition will be used for education?*

A44. All funds received from education property taxes are placed in the Alberta School Foundation Fund and will be used only for education in Alberta's public and separate schools. The monies received and expended from the fund will be accounted for and audited separately from the General Revenues of the province.

A separate monitoring committee is being established to monitor the Fund. The committee will include representatives of the Alberta School Boards Association, the Public School Boards Association, The Alberta Catholic School Trustees' Association, the general public and be chaired by the Chairman of the Provincial Audit Commission.

**Q45.** *Who decides what the uniform education tax rate will be?*

A45. The provincial government will set the education tax rate based on the amount of money required, in conjunction with funding provided from provincial general revenues, to maintain a quality education system in Alberta.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION

**Q46.** *If the government wants a quality education system why is funding being reduced?*

A46. Alberta must eliminate its deficit and eventually its accumulated debt to give young Albertans the opportunity to enjoy in the future, the quality of life enjoyed today.

Close to 14% of the total general provincial spending is on education. Education must share in the government's effort to eliminate the deficit.

Quality can be maintained and improved, even during a time of reduced spending, by making better use of available education dollars. Better management of existing resources, rather than more resources, is the key to the future of education.



***Q47. How can quality education be maintained when funding is reduced significantly?***

- A47. Education is government's highest priority and therefore the reductions in education spending have been less than in any other area of government spending.

Between 1992/93 and 1995/96 total spending on education has been reduced by only 5.6%, and by 1997/98 when education funding begins to increase, the reduction will be only 5% over 5 years, or about \$150 million.

The education sector achieved an overall 5% reduction in education salaries and benefits, resulting in a savings of an estimated \$110 million.

Reducing the number of school boards and school trustees will result in a saving of about \$13 million in the short term and even more in the future as greater efficiencies are achieved.

By limiting school board central office administration spending to an average of 4% beginning in the 1995/96 school year an estimated \$60 million will be freed-up for student instruction in 1995/96.

Redirecting administration spending to instruction will mean more money in 1995/96 for teachers, teacher assistants and learning resources for students.

Quality education will be maintained by focussing education dollars on student instruction and not on excess administration.

***Q48. What about future cuts to education, won't they affect quality?***

- A48. Education has now essentially reached its spending reduction target. By 1997/98 education funding will begin to increase. Quality will be maintained and improved.

## **INSTRUCTION SPENDING NOT ADMINISTRATION**

***Q49. What is meant by "redirecting resources from administration to instruction"?***

- A49. The new funding framework provides separate allocations for instruction and for administration.

The amount previously spent by school boards on central administration is being significantly reduced and the money saved allocated to instruction.

**Q50. *What expenditures are covered by the instruction block funding provided to school boards?***

- A50. This block covers expenditures in areas dealing directly with or aiding in, the teaching of students or improving the quality of teaching.

These areas include the costs of teachers, instructional support staff, principals, learning resources and supplies, and equipment and furnishings of direct benefit or service to the instruction of students.

Instruction funding also includes the cost of principals, vice-principals, assistant principals, department heads and coordinators, clerical and support staff in the school; library, counselling and testing services provided by school-based staff; telephone, photocopying and fax machines for instructional support staff; and support services provided from outside the school **at the school's discretion** and supported by the school's budget.

**Q51. *What expenditures are covered by the "administration" allocation?***

- A51. This block covers the cost of activities which have as their purpose the general regulation and direction of the affairs of the school jurisdiction that are system-wide.

System administration includes costs related to the operation of the school board, superintendents, secretary treasurers, and their respective staff, including supplies and capital for administrative equipment and facilities.

It includes the cost of monitoring and evaluating school programs; staff expenses of the school trustees; financial and human resource services; communications; central purchasing; facilities planning and such things as insurance and legal costs.

System administration may also include costs of support staff and associated activities provided across the jurisdiction where these costs are at the **discretion of the board** and **budgeted at the system rather than the school level**. (includes curriculum services, staff development activities and system-based staff for library, counselling and testing services.

**Q52. *How much can a school board spend on administration?***

- A52. School boards are limited to between 4% and 6% of total expenditures for administration spending, depending on the number of students in the jurisdiction.

At the same time, school boards may allocate an additional 1.6% from their instructional allocation for system based instructional support in 1995/96. This will decrease to 1.2% in 1996/97 and 0.8% in 1997/98. This allows central administration to provide those system-wide instructional support services deemed necessary by the board.



*Q53. Won't this limit on administrative spending and system-based instructional support cause inefficiency and reduce the support available to students and teachers?*

A53. The resources being saved by limiting school board administration and central office spending are being redirected to schools for the instruction of students.

The inefficiencies of a large, centralized bureaucracy in school board central offices will be reduced, and more resources to principals and teachers provided.

Local schools will have more resources to meet the needs of their students and will be able to make decisions on how best to use those resources.

Efficient centralized services will be maintained at central office.

### **FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

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